

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Education Pre-K - 12 Committee

BILL: SB 434

INTRODUCER: Senator Sobel

SUBJECT: Suicide Prevention Education

DATE: March 11, 2010

REVISED: _____

| | ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|----|----------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1. | Carrouth | Matthews | ED | Pre-meeting |
| 2. | | | CF | |
| 3. | | | EA | |
| 4. | | | | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |

I. Summary:

The bill requires that beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, district school boards must provide access to educational resources regarding suicide prevention to all instructional and administrative personnel. Staff who complete approved training would be eligible for continuing education in-service credits (CEU's).

This bill amends section 1006.07 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

The School Community Professional Development Act established under s. 1012.98, F.S., requires each school district required to develop a professional development system to include in-service activities for instructional personnel, one component of which requires a focus on classroom management, parent involvement, and school safety.

According to the Florida Department of Education, student personnel services staff¹ identified under s. 1012.01(2)(b), F.S., are responsible for addressing personal and social adjustment needs of students, providing suicide prevention and awareness training and resources to students and staff, consulting with other school personnel regarding social-emotional concerns, and providing direct intervention support for students with mental health needs, including those students who are at risk for suicide.² These staff members, although equipped professionally to address adolescent mental health issues, often do not interact with most students on a daily basis.

¹ Student personnel services staff include guidance counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers.

² Department of Education, bill analysis, November 10, 2009, on file with the committee.

Based on information provided by the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention,³ nine out of ten adolescents who die by suicide give clues to someone before they attempt. School personnel interact with students on a daily basis and may notice changes in student behavior or attitude. According to the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention, many suicidal students will likely go to a teacher or coach before they go to a school counselor, yet teachers and coaches lack the training necessary to deal with these issues.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill would require that, beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, each school district shall provide access to suicide prevention education for all instructional and administrative personnel using resources approved by the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention. Staff choosing to participate in approved training would be eligible to receive in-service credit hours for purposes of continuing education and certification.⁴ Appropriate training of school staff who work most closely with students may increase their awareness of student behaviors associated with thoughts of harming themselves and therefore may reduce the number of youth suicides.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

³ The Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention is located in the Office of the Governor. See http://www.flgov.com/suicide_prevention_toolkit.

⁴ The Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention makes available on its website links to numerous free, online training opportunities for teachers and administrators. The office especially recommends two training opportunities: *Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention* and *Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention*. The training opportunities are available at: <http://www.helppromotehope.com/resources/schools.php>.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Depending on which educational resources are selected by the school district, there may be an indeterminate fiscal impact to school districts. However, the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention offers many educational training opportunities or resources for free.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.